

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A stereo system for listening to a variety of audio sources with substantially equal convenience comprising:

a visual display for providing audio source choices to a user, said visual display  
5 also providing displays for managing audio sources;

user control buttons allowing said user to choose an audio source;

menu buttons allowing said user to choose functions for managing said audio  
sources;

tuner circuitry for receiving radio frequency signals from radio broadcast  
10 stations;

a compact disk player;

one or more audio amplifiers;

one or more loudspeakers operably connected to said audio amplifiers;

a network interface for transmitting and receiving digital data over a  
15 communications network;

a data storage device;

a decode software module configured to decode compressed audio files into a  
computer readable format;

a communication software module configured to use said network interface to  
20 connect to an Internet to receive assignments of playlists, said playlists comprising  
audio data from a variety of audio sources, said assignments providing information  
about the location of other web sites containing the audio sources, said software module  
configured to subsequently connect through said Internet to said web sites to download  
said audio files; and

25 a third software module stored on said data storage device, said software module  
configured to use said network interface to connect to said Internet to receive digitized  
audio broadcasts from said Internet, said module further configured to provide a select  
broadcast display to allow the user to selectably connect a module broadcast to the input  
of said one or more audio amplifiers either from a local AM or FM radio station or from  
30 said Internet so that to the user, reception of a broadcast form the World Wide Web is  
not substantially more complicated than listening to a local FM or AM radio station.

2. The system of Claim 1, wherein said compressed audio file is in MP3 format.

3. The system of Claim 1, wherein said first software module reads audio files in Windows Media Audio format.

5 4. The system of Claim 1, wherein an extraction software module extracts audio files from a compact disc and stores said extracted audio files on said data storage device in a computer readable format.

5. The system of Claim 4, wherein a compression software module converts said extracted audio files into a compressed file format.

10 6. The system of Claim 1, wherein an upload software module residing on a server uploads selected audio files from a second network device to allow said stereo system to download said selected audio files.

15 7. The system of Claim 1, wherein at least one of said menu buttons is a context-sensitive menu button that provides different functions depending on a type of audio source.

8. The system of Claim 1, wherein said user-control buttons further comprise an action button that allows the user to request information on artists for a selected audio source.

20 9. The system of Claim 8, wherein said information includes touring information for the given artist.

10. The system of Claim 8, wherein said information includes news concerning the given artist of the audio source.

11. The system of Claim 8, wherein the user is provided with the option to purchase items related to the given artist.

25 12. The system of Claim 8, wherein said information includes a listing of other albums by the given artist.

13. The system of Claim 8, wherein the user can choose to create a log of the information provided by the action button, said log then being uploaded to the server.

30 14. The system of Claim 8, wherein the user can request artists and song titles for similar music to the given artist and given song title.

15. The system of Claim 8, wherein the user can request samples of music from an audio source.

16. The system of Claim 8, wherein at least one advertisement is displayed along with the information associated with the artist.

5 17. The system of Claim 8, wherein said action button further allows the user to purchase items related to the artist associated with the audio source.

18. The system of Claim 8, wherein said action button further allows the user to purchase items related to the artist associated with the audio source.

10 19. The system of Claim 16, wherein the displayed advertisement includes menu options for the purchase of items.

20. The system of Claim 1, wherein said user control buttons further comprise an action button that allows the user to request a title of a song for a selected audio source, said audio source being sent to a second server for analysis, and said second server sending the artist name and title of said audio source back to the server.

15 21. The system of Claim 20, wherein said action button further allows the user to request the name of the artist associated with the audio source, said audio source being sent to a second server for analysis, and said second server sending the artist name and title of said audio source back to the server.

20 22. The system of Claim 1, wherein a digital output cable provides for the transfer of a digital audio stream to another audio device.

23. The system of Claim 22, wherein the digital output cable outputs optical signals.

24. The system of Claim 22, wherein the digital output cable is a TOS link.

25 25. The system of Claim 1, wherein said compact disk player can play standard compact disks or MP3 encoded compact disks.

26. The system of Claim 1, wherein said user control buttons further comprise a shuttle button, said shuttle button comprising a circular button with a right button, a left button, an up button, and a down button.

30 27. The system of Claim 26, wherein said shuttle button further comprises an inner circular button which allows the user to make a selection after navigating through options with said right button, said left button, said up button, and said down button.

28. The system of Claim 27, wherein said left button, said right button, said up button, and said down button lie on an outer ring portion of said shuttle button.

29. The system of Claim 26, wherein said right button and said left button are used to navigate through playlists and said up and said down button are used to navigate through songs in a given playlist selected by said right button and said left button.

30. A network-enabled component audio device comprising:  
a visual display for providing audio source choices to a user;  
a visual display for providing visual information for managing audio sources;  
user-control buttons allowing said user to choose an audio source;  
menu buttons allowing said user to choose functions for managing said audio sources;  
a compact disk player;  
a network interface for transmitting and receiving digital data over a communications network;  
a data storage device;  
a first software module configured to decode compressed audio files into a computer readable format; and  
a second software module configured to use said network interface to connect to an Internet to receive assignments of playlists from a second software module, said playlists comprising audio from a variety of audio sources, said assignments providing information about the location of other web sites containing the audio sources, said second software module configured to subsequently connect through said Internet to said web sites to download said audio files.

31. A method for assigning playlists of music from one electronic device to another, comprising the steps of:

providing a first software module to manage playlists of songs, said software module allowing a user to compose playlists of a variety of audio sources, said software module allowing a user to assign a first playlist from a first device, to at least a second device;

checking a data storage space of said second device for songs listed on the first playlist;

accessing a server site to obtain locations of Internet sites where said first device can download audio files;

5            providing a second software module to connect to said web sites to download remaining songs needed to form said playlist, said second software module connecting if songs needed to form said playlist are not stored on said second data storage space of said second device; and

10            uploading files to said server site from said first device and downloading files to said second device if said second software module is unable to download a file from said web site.

32.    A system for requesting information related to an audio source, comprising:

15            an action button;  
              a visual display for providing information to a user;  
              a network interface for transmitting and receiving digital data over a communications network;  
              a data storage device;  
              a software module configured to use said network interface to connect to an  
20    Internet, request data associated with an audio source from a server in response to pressing said action button, and receive data associated with said audio source from server, said software module configured to display data received from the server on said visual display.

25            33.    The system of Claim 32, wherein said server downloads to said data storage device information related to said audio source.

34.    The system of Claim 33, wherein said information related to said audio source is displayed on said visual display.

35.    The system of Claim 34, wherein said visual display presents options to control viewing the information associated with said audio source.

30            36.    The system of Claim 33, wherein said information related to said audio source comprises artist information.

37. The system of Claim 33, wherein said artist information comprises tour information.

38. The system of Claim 33, wherein said information related to said audio source comprises title information.

5 39. The system of Claim 33, wherein said information related to said audio source comprises music-genre information.

40. An audio system comprising:

a music playback system configured to receive a playlist from a playlist-server;

a radio tuner; and

10 user controls to allow a user to play songs from said playlist or from said radio tuner.

41. The audio system of Claim 40, further comprising an action button configured to request information regarding a currently playing song.

15 42. The audio system of Claim 41, wherein said currently playing song is determined by sampling a portion of said currently playing song and comparing said portion with data in a database.

43. The audio system of Claim 40, further configured to track which songs were played from said playlist for use by third parties.

20 44. The audio system of Claim 40, wherein said server comprises a personal audio network server.

45. The audio system of Claim 40, further comprising a display, said display providing a menu for selecting an audio source.

46. The audio system of Claim 45, wherein said menu includes a playlist menu item, a radio menu item, a compact disk menu item.

25 47. The audio system of Claim 45, wherein user-control buttons can be remotely disabled.

48. An audio system comprising:

a visual display for providing audio source choices to a user, said visual display having a display area having a smallest dimension of not more than four inches;

30 user control buttons allowing said user to choose functions for managing said audio sources without use of a keyboard or a mouse;

tuner circuitry for receiving radio frequency signals from radio broadcast stations;

a media reader;

a data storage device;

5 an extraction software module which extracts audio files from a compact disc and stores said audio files on said data storage device in a computer readable format;

a decode software module configured to decode said extracted audio files that are compressed into a computer readable format;

10 a playlist software module which allows said user to construct playlists from said audio files;

context-sensitive menu buttons corresponding to menu items displayed on said display;

a digital output cable providing for the transfer of a digital audio stream to another device; and

15 an analog audio output.

49. The system of Claim 49, wherein the audio system further comprises a digital input cable providing for the transfer of a digital audio stream from another device.

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